

(Washington, DC) Today, Congressman Alcee L. Hastings (D-Miramar) was named Co-Chairman of the Congressional Sugar Caucus. With this position, Hastings cements a leadership role in the ongoing Congressional dialogue of one of South Florida's most prominent industries. Congressman Mike Simpson (R-ID) will serve with Hastings as Co-Chairman of the Sugar Caucus.

"I am honored to serve as Co-Chairman of a caucus that so fundamentally impacts the economy in my district and the livelihoods of many of my constituents," said Hastings. "This new position will allow me to share my own personal experiences and knowledge pertaining to the role sugar plays here in the United States and its impact on the economy and jobs. I look forward to working with my colleagues in Congress to help raise awareness of this vital industry and ensure that our farmers have the resources necessary to meet our nation's agricultural needs."

Florida is the largest producer of sugarcane in the United States. As of the 2008-2009 crop year, approximately 400,000 acres of Florida land are dedicated to the growth of sugarcane, yielding over 13 million tons of stalks and over 1.5 million tons of raw sugar annually. Sugar production creates jobs for approximately 25,000 Floridians.

The Congressional Sugar Caucus provides Members of Congress and their staff with a forum to discuss issues affecting the domestic sugar industry by holding meetings and briefings and focusing on coalition-building through education and communication.

Congressman Alcee L. Hastings serves as Senior Member of the House Rules Committee, Ranking Democratic Member of the U.S. Helsinki Commission, and Democratic Chairman of the Florida Delegation.

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